

Bodo language

Bodo^[3] (बर'बड़ [bɔ̃ɾo]), (also called **Boro**) is the Sino-Tibetan language spoken primarily by the Boro people of Northeast India, Nepal and Bengal. It is official language of the Bodoland autonomous region and co-official language of the state of Assam in India^[4] It is also one of the 22 scheduled languages that is given a special constitutional status in India. Since 1963, the language has been written using the Devanagari script. It was formerly written using Latin and Assamese script. Some scholars have suggested that the language used to have its own now lost script known as Deodhai.

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History

As result of socio-political awakenings and movements launched by different Boro organisations since 1913, the language was introduced in 1963 as a medium of instruction in the primary schools in Boro dominated areas. Today, the Boro language serves as a medium of instruction up to the secondary level and it is an associated official language in the state of Assam. Bodo language and literature have been offered as a post-graduate course the University of Guwahati since 1996. There are a large number of Bodo books on poetry, drama, short

Bodo	
Boro language	
बर'बड़/Bodo	
बर' राव	
The words <i>Bodo Rao</i> (Bodo language)written in Devanagari script	
Native to	Northeast India
Ethnicity	Boro people
Native speakers	1.4 million (2011 census) ^[1]
Language family	Sino-Tibetan - Brahmaputran - Bodo–Garo - Bodo Bodo
Writing system	Devanagari (official) Latin (frequently used) Eastern Nagari (former) Deodhai (not attested)
Official status	
Official language in	 India (Bodoland, Assam)
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	brx
Glottolog	bodo1269 (http://glottolog.org/resource/lan guoid/id/bodo1269) ^[2]

बर' राव

The words *Bodo Rao* (Bodo language)written in Devanagari script

stories, novels, biography, travelogues, children's literature, and literary criticism. Though there exists different dialects, the form used around Kokrajhar district is considered standard.

Writing system and script movement

It is reported that the Boro and the Dimasa languages used a script called *Deodhai* that is no longer attested.^[5] The Latin script was used first to write down the language, when a prayer book was published in 1843, and then extensively used by Endle beginning 1884 and in 1904, when the script was used to teach children. The first use of the Assamese/Bengali script occurred in 1915 (*Boroni Fisa o Ayen*) and the first magazine, *Bibar* (1924-1940) was tri-lingual in Boro, Assamese and Bengali, with Boro written in Assamese/Bengali script. In 1952, the Bodo Sahitya Sabha decided to use the Assamese script exclusively for the language.^[6] In 1963 Boro was introduced in schools as a medium of instruction, in which Assamese script was used.^[7] Into the 1960s the Boro language was predominantly written in Assamese/Bengali script, though the Christian community continued to use Latin for Boro.^{[8][9]}



Boro Script Movement

With the Assamese Language movement in Assam peaking in the 1960s the Boro community felt threatened and decided to not use the Assamese script.^[10] After a series of proposals and expert committees, in 1970 the Bodo Sahitya Sabha reversed itself and unanimously decided to adopt the Latin script for the language in its 11th annual conference.^[11] The BSS submitted this demand to the Assam Government in 1971, which was rejected on the grounds that the Latin script was of foreign origin. This instigated a movement for the Latin script which became a part of the movement for a separate state, *Udayachal*, then led by the Plains Tribe Council of Assam (PTCA). In this context, the Boro leaders were advised by the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to choose any Indian script other than Latin.^[12] In defiance of the Assam Government, in April 1974 the BSS went ahead and published *Bithorai*, a Boro textbook, in Latin script and asked school teachers to follow it.^[13]

Retaliating against the unilateral decision, the Assam Government withheld grants to schools using the Latin script. This triggered a phase of active movement that was joined by the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) and the PTCA. This led to a critical situation in November 1974 when fifteen volunteers of the movement died in a police firing, and many others were injured. Unable to resolve the issue, the Assam Government referred the matter to the Union Government.^[14] In the discussion, the Union Government suggested Devanagari script as the solution to the problem, which the BSS accepted in the Memorandum of Understanding in April 1975, and adopted later year in the Annual Conference.^[15] This ended the Boro Script Movement.

Final Acceptance of Devanagari script

The Devanagari script for Boro was an unexpected development and it was not immediately accepted by the wider Boro community.^[16] The BSS failed to implement the use of the Devanagari script, and writers continued to use the Assamese/Bengali and Latin scripts.^[17] In 1982, ABSU included the demand of the Latin script in Boro schools in its charter of Demands. Following an expert committee report, constituted by BSS, the Bodoland Autonomous Council adopted a resolution to use Latin script in its territory, which the Assam Government too accepted.

Nevertheless, in the discussion with the Bodo Liberation Tigers, the Union Government demanded the implementation of the earlier agreement with the BSS on the use of the Devanagari script if the Boro language was to be included in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. Following this, the ABSU and the BSS agreed to use the Devanagari script exclusively, and the matter was finally settled.



Bodo language textbooks for secondary schools written in Devanagari script

Phonology

The Boro language has a total of 30 phonemes: 6 vowels, 16 consonants, and 8 diphthongs—with a strong prevalence of the high back unrounded vowel /ɯ/. The Boro language use tones to distinguish words. There are three different tones used in the language: high, medium and low. The difference between high and low tone is apparent and quite common.

Vowels

There are six vowels in Boro language.

Vowels									
	Front			Central			Back		
	IPA	ROM	Script	IPA	ROM	Script	IPA	ROM	Script
Close	i	i					u	u	
							ɯ	w	
Close-mid	e	e					o	o	
Open				a	a				

- All vowels occur in all three positions.

Diphthongs

Diphthongs			
	i	o	u
i			iu
e		eo	
a	ai	ao	
o	oi		
u	ui		
ɯ	wi		wu

Consonants

The Boro language has sixteen consonants.

Consonants

		<u>Labial</u>			<u>Alveolar</u>			<u>Dorsal</u>			<u>Glottal</u>		
		<u>IPA</u>	<u>ROM</u>	<u>Script</u>	<u>IPA</u>	<u>ROM</u>	<u>Script</u>	<u>IPA</u>	<u>ROM</u>	<u>Script</u>	<u>IPA</u>	<u>ROM</u>	<u>Script</u>
<u>Nasal</u>	voiceless	m	m										
	voiced				n	n		ŋ	ng				
<u>Stop</u>	<u>aspirated</u>	p ^h	ph		t ^h	th		k ^h	kh				
	voiced	b	b		d	d		g	g				
<u>Fricative</u>	voiceless				s	s							
	voiced				z	z					h	h	
<u>Flap/Trill</u>	voiced				r	r							
<u>Approximant</u>	voiceless	w	w										
	voiced							j	y				
	<u>lateral</u>				l	l							

- The three voiceless aspirated stops, /p^h, t^h, k^h/, are unreleased in syllable final position. Their unaspirated voiced counterparts are released and cannot occur word final position.
- Sometimes /p^h, t^h, k^h, s/ are pronounced as /b, d, g, z/ respectively.
- The consonants /b, d, m, n, r, l/ can occur in all position.
- The consonants /p^h, t^h, k^h, g, s, h/ cannot appear in word final positions in indigenous Boro words, but can occur in loan words.
- The consonants /ŋ, y, w/ cannot appear in word initial positions.

Tones

Boro is a tonal language.

[18]

Examples of high and low tone and the difference of meaning

High	Meaning	Low	Meaning
Buh	to beat	Bu	to swell
Hah	mud, to be able	Ha	to cut
Hahm	to get thin	Ham	to get well
Gwdwh	to sink	Gwdw	past
Jah	to eat	Ja	to be
Rahn	to get dry	Ran	to divide

Grammar

Sentence structure

The sentences in Boro language consist of either a "Subject + Verb" or "Subject + Object + Verb".

Examples of sentences in Boro language

Subject + Verb	Subject + Object + Verb
Ang mwntiya	Laimwn ah Apple jadwng
Nijwm ah wndudwng	Nwng wngkam jabai?

Vocabulary

Numerals

The numerals used in Boro language are :

Numerals in Boro language

Number	In Boro language	In English
0	Latikho	Zero
1	Se	One
2	Nwi	Two
3	Tham	Three
4	Brwi	Four
5	Ba	Five
6	Do	Six
7	Sni	Seven
8	Daen	Eight
9	Gu	Nine
10	Zi	Ten
11	Zi se	Eleven
12	Zi nwi	Twelve
13	Zi tam	Thirteen
14	Zi brwi	Fourteen
15	Zi ba	Fifteen
16	Zi do	Sixteen
17	Zi sni	Seventeen
18	Zi daen	Eighteen
19	Zi gu	Nineteen
20	Nwi zi	Twenty
100	Zwouse	One Hundred
200	Nwi zwou	Two Hundred
300	Tam zwou	Three Hundred
1,000	Se Rwza	One Thousand
2,000	Nwi Rwza	Two Thousand
10,000	Zi Rwza	Ten Thousand

Education

Boro is a compulsory subject till class 10 in tribal areas of Assam who do not want to study Assamese. The subject is mandatory in all schools including those under the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS). The legislation was passed in the assembly in August 2017.^[19]

See also

- Bodo people
- Bodo Sahitya Sabha
- Kokborok language
- Languages of Asia
- List of Bodo films of 2017

Notes

1. [1] (http://censusindia.gov.in/2011Census/C-16_25062018_NEW.pdf)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Bodo-Mech" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/bodo1269>). *Glottolog* 3.0. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. "Table 1 - LSI: Bodo; Modern name: Boro" (Jaquesson 2017:101)
4. "OMG! These 8 famous facts about India are actually myths | Free Press Journal" (<http://www.freepressjournal.in/india/omg-these-8-famous-facts-about-india-are-actually-myths/1117797>). *freepressjournal.in*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20170819145249/http://www.freepressjournal.in/india/omg-these-8-famous-facts-about-india-are-actually-myths/1117797>) from the original on 19 August 2017. Retrieved 18 August 2017.
5. "Bishnu Prasad Rabha, the famous Artist of Assam, told me that in ancient times there were a kind of Deodhai scripts among the Kacharis (Boros and Dimasas). Sri Rabha represented in writing the Deodhai alphabet as gathered from an informant in Dimapur which was noted for the Kachari reign and remains representing the art and architecture. As this form of Deodhai scripts is no longer in vogue, I leave the matter for further enlightenment." (Bhattacharya 1964:15–16)
6. (Sarmah 2014:1335–1336)
7. (Sarmah 2014:1336)
8. (Bhattacharya 1964:16)
9. (Sarmah 2014:1336)
10. "The Assamese language movement of 1960 had stirred up their keenness to have separate script other than the Assamese, preferably the Roman script." (Sarmah 2014:1336)
11. (Sarmah 2014:1336)
12. (Sarmah 2014:1336–1337)
13. "On 22nd April, 1974 the Bodo Sahitya Sabha without the approval of the State Government adopted the Roman Script as the sole script for the Boro language. The Sabha declared its decision to introduce *Bithorai*, an elementary textbook written in the Roman script, in the school curriculum. The Sabha appealed to all the teachers of Boro medium primary schools to introduce the *Bithorai* in Class - 1 in their own." (Sarmah 2014:1337)
14. (Sarmah 2014:1337)
15. "The representatives of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha signed a memorandum with the Union Government on 9th April, 1975, agreeing to adopt the Devanagari script for the Bodo language." (Sarmah 2014:1337)
16. (Sarmah 2014:1338)

17. "The failure of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha to show sincerity on the implementation of Devanagari script in strict sense sent a wrong message to the younger generation. They thought that the adoption of the Devanagari script is a temporary arrangement. Taking the advantage, a group of Boro writers continued the use of Assamese and Roman scripts instead of practicing the Devanagari script in their writings." (Sarmah 2014:1338)
18. Mochari, Moniram (1985). *Bodo-English Dictionary*. Bengtol, Kokrajhar: The Bodo Catholic Youth Association.
19. "Assam to make Assamese mandatory till Class 10; Bodo, Bengali options for some" (<http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/assam-to-make-assamese-mandatory-till-class-10-bodo-bengali-options-for-some/story-waCJyVrdUoaxsnhgQPpmbK.html>). *hindustantimes.com*/. 19 April 2017. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20170422001854/http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/assam-to-make-assamese-mandatory-till-class-10-bodo-bengali-options-for-some/story-waCJyVrdUoaxsnhgQPpmbK.html>) from the original on 22 April 2017. Retrieved 4 May 2017.

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External links

- Bodoland.org (<http://www.bodoland.org/>)
- Boro Language (<https://web.archive.org/web/20050907205229/http://www.iitg.ernet.in/rcilts/boro.htm>)
- Bodo computing resources at TDIL (<https://web.archive.org/web/20100803000435/http://ildc.in/bodo/boindex.aspx>)
- Language Information Service – India (<http://www.lisindia.net/Boro/Boro.html>)

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